(e) whether there was any delay in implementing TKDL project; and

(f) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Persons with Commerce and Life Science were appointed as I.T. Experts, as they had also requisite experience of working in the I.T. Sector.

(e) and (f) Substantial work on the TKDL has been completed.

Herbal Plants in NER

2555. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the North Eastern Region is very rich in herbal plants;

(b) if so, whether this wealth of the region has been exploited;

(c) whether Government have prepared any plans to make use of the herbal wealth of the region;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA): (a) It is correct that North-East Region is very rich in biodiversity which includes medicinal plants.

(b) to (e) The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC), is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in NE States including Sikkim. Under the scheme assistance is provided for development of horticulture crops including Medicinal & Aromatic plants in the region. Assistance is also provided for establishment of Progeny & Herbal Gardens. The National Medicinal Plants Board has sanctioned 29 projects in the North-East (Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura & Agartala) out of 145 projects for the over all development of medicinal plants sector in the region.